

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

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FM AMEMBASSY LILONGWE

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INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SHUM, PDIP, OVIP, MI (BANDA H. KAMUZU

SUBJ: HUMAN RIGHTS-AUSTIN MBISA

REF: LILONGWE 0545

1. AFTER CONSIDERABLE DIFFICULTY MAKING CONNECTIONS BECAUSE OF NGWIRI'S INVOLVEMENT WITH PREPARATIONS FOR PRESIDENT BANDA'S DEPARTURE AND HIS OWN (HE LEFT FOR LONDON YESTERDAY AND WILL ARRIVE IN WASHINGTON 24 APRIL), VICE CONSUL HURLEY TALKED WITH HIM ABOUT ABOVE CASE LATE YESTERDAY. FOLLOWING (PARAS 2-5) IS HIS ACCOUNT BUT SHOULD BE KEPT IN MIND NGWIRI SPOKE HASTILY AND WHILE PREOCCUPIED WITH MANY OTHER THINGS.

2. ACCORDING TO NGWIRI, MBISA RETURNED TO MALAWI AND UNDERWENT THE NORMAL VETTING PROCESS. THERE WERE NO INCIDENTS RECORDED IN HIS FILE AND HE WAS TO BEGIN WORK AS A LECTURER AT CHANCELLOR COLLEGE ON 8 FEBRUARY. AT NO TIME HAD HE BEEN INTERVIEWED BY THE MALAWI SPECIAL BRANCH OR THE POLICE DURING THE VETTING PERIOD. THE POLICE CONDUCTED ONLY A BACKGROUND AND FILE CHECK. ON 7 FEBRUARY, HOWEVER, MBISA (WITHOUT BEING ASKED) CONTACTED THE POLICE AND ASKED IF ANY DEROGATORY INFORMATION HAD BEEN UNCOVERED ON HIM. A NEGATIVE REPLY

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WAS RECEIVED. MBISA TOOK WITH HIM TO THE POLICE STATION A FILE OF PERSONAL CORRESPONDENCE THAT HE HAD INITIATED ASKING FOR AN EXTENSION OF HIS STAY IN THE U. S. FOR EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES. MBISA ASKED THE POLICE TO REVIEW THE FILE TO DETERMINE WHETHER THE FILE CONTAINED ANY DATA CRITICAL OF MALAWI. THE POLICE REVIEWED THE FILE AND TOLD HIM ALL WAS IN ORDER AND THERE WAS NO REASON WHY HE NEEDED TO VISIT THE POLICE OR SHOW THE FILE TO THE POLICE.

3. THAT NIGHT MBISA HUNG HIMSELF FOR AN UNKNOWN REASON. NGWIRI, WHO SAID HE SAW MBISA A FEW HOURS BEFORE HIS DEATH, SAID HE WAS IRRATIONAL, DEPRESSED, AND HAD BEEN WEEPING FOR SEVERAL DAYS. MBISA'S BROTHER, SENIOR MALAWIAN ECONOMIST PETER MBISA, HAD EARLIER EXPRESSED CONCERN TO NGWIRI REGARDING HIS BROTHER'S FUNNY BEHAVIOR.

4. AT 1530 HOURS ON 13 APRIL (IN THE VICE CONSUL'S PRESENCE) NGWIRI CALLED POLICE COMMISSIONER J. KAMWANA TO VERIFY THE CIRCUMSTANCES REGARDING MBISA'S DEATH. KAMWANA WAS NOT IN THE OFFICE SO HE TALKED WITH OFFICER-IN-CHARGE OF THE CID W. LONGWE AND THE TWO TALKED FOR 15 MINUTES. NGWIRI ASKED FOR LONGWE TO PREPARE A WRITTEN REPORT FOR HAND DELIVERY TO NGWIRI IN LONDON. LONGWE WAS RELUCTANT TO PREPARE THE REPORTING WITHOUT WRITTEN AUTHORIZATION FROM NGWIRI. LATTER PROMISED TO PROVIDE THE AUTHORIZATION AND HE IMMEDIATELY CALLED HIS SECRETARY IN LILONGWE AND INSTRUCTED HER TO SEND A LETTER TO KAMWANA BY 1600 HOURS ON 13 APRIL.

5. THE WRITTEN REPORT WILL BE HAND-CARRIED TO LONDON ON 14 APRIL AND GIVEN TO NGWIRI. NGWIRI AND SPECIAL BRANCH CHIEF ITIMU WILL MEET WITH PRESIDENT BANDA ON 17 APRIL TO DISCUSS THE CASE AND THE INQUIRY FROM THE UNITED STATES. NGWIRI SAID HE SUPPOSED BANDA WAS AWARE OF MBISA'S DEATH BUT NGWIRI HIMSELF HAS NEVER MENTIONED IT TO HIM. NGWIRI WILL RECOMMEND TO BANDA THAT THE REPORT OR THE SUBSTANCE OF IT BE PROVIDED TO LONDON-BASED U. S. EMBASSY OFFICER RAY SEITZ. NGWIRI BELIEVED THAT BANDA WILL APPROVE PASSAGE OF THE REPORT. HE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WAS ASKED TO PASS IT TO RAY SEITZ IN LONDON. NGWIRI WILL BE STAYING AT HOTEL BRITANNIA THE NIGHT OF 17 APRIL. WOULD APPRECIATE EMBASSY, LONDON CALLING NGWIRI TO FACILITATE CONTACT.

6. WHEN I LEARNED LATE YESTERDAY FROM HURLEY THAT NGWIRI HAD NOT INFORMED PRESIDENT BANDA RE SENATOR BAYH'S INQUIRY I DECIDED TO CALL GOVERNOR TEMBO AND URGE THAT BANDA BE TOLD BEFORE HE DEPARTS COUNTRY IN CASE HE WANTS TO TAKE ANY ACTION. MANAGED TO CATCH TEMBO AT 2 A. M. AND HE READILY SAW SENSITIVITY OF MATTER AND SAPD HE WOULD TELL BANDA THIS MORNING. COMMENT: HURLEY SAID NGWIRI WAS SEEMINGLY OPEN RE CASE BUT WE SUSPECT IT MAY NEVER HAVE BEEN BROUGHT TO BANDA'S ATTENTION AND THIS HAS CAUSED MUCH NERVOUSNESS AND BACKING AND FILLIN G.

ALTHOUGH WE CONTINUE TO DOUBT ANY FOUL PLAY INVOLVED WE THINK NGWIRI AND POLICE ARE EMBARRASSED RE POLICE INVOLVEMENT IN QUESTIONING MBISA.

STEVENSON

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